

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Parowan High School
168 North Main
Parowan, Utah 84761**

April 20-21, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Parowan High School
168 North Main
Parowan, UT 84761**

April 20-21, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 20-21, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Parowan High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Scott Doubek is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Parowan High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Parowan High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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PAROWAN HIGH SCHOOL
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PAROWAN HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Parowan High School will provide a safe and nurturing environment where the potential of all students is maximized; continually develop curriculum to meet the needs of individual students in a changing world; through quality classroom experiences, varied forms of assessment, and extracurricular activities, students will develop a feeling of self-worth and an understanding of accountability; instill in our students an appreciation for their culture and the history of their community and country; and encourage citizenship based upon solid values, service, and life-long learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Students, parents, and educators are responsible/accountable for student learning.
- Students can learn if given appropriate time and resources.
- Student success can be recognized in academic and extracurricular activities.
- Students have the right to attend a school with a safe and welcome environment.
- Students can receive a well-rounded education and create an attitude of being a life-long learner.
- Students can have multiple opportunities and assessments to succeed in a quality classroom setting.
- Students can develop skills in problem solving, service learning, interpersonal relationships, good citizenship, and gain an appreciation for local culture and history.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. John Goldhardt, Snow Canyon Middle School, Washington County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Sheri Fisher, Hurricane Middle School, Washington County School District

Marilyn Robinson, Bryce Valley High School, Garfield County School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

PAROWAN HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Parowan High School is a grade 7-12 school located in the rural town of Parowan, which is located in the southwestern Utah along the I-15 corridor, approximately 20 miles north of Cedar City. Students from Parowan, Paragonah, and Brian Head attend Parowan High School. One elementary school feeds the high school. The two schools are on the same street and the same land plot. Facilities and some activities are shared; for example, the elementary cafeteria is shared and so is the high school auditorium.

The Parowan community is made up of approximately 1,500 residences and approximately 4,000 people. There are 125 small businesses, but no large industry. Many residents work in nearby areas. With the proximity of Brian Head Ski Resort and Cedar Breaks National Monument, the community's economy tends to focus on the service sector. The ski industry tends to bring the most visitors through the area.

Parowan High has a total student body of 358 students, with 131 students in grades 7-8 and 239 students in grades 9-12. The 358 students represent 250 families, and 30 percent of the student body has a sibling attending the school. From 1999-2005, the student population decreased from a high of 400 students in 1999 to the current 358. Ninety-four percent of the students are Caucasian. Most of the remaining six percent have a Hispanic background. Approximately 10 percent of the student population receives special education services, and 30 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Parowan is the smallest of the three high schools in the Iron County School District. Each of the school's staff of twenty teachers often has five or more different class preparations. The school is aiming to have every teacher meet the NCLB "highly qualified" requirements by 2006.

The school has seen an increase in levels of student achievement for the last four years. For two straight years, Parowan High School has met the standards of Adequate Yearly Progress. In addition, Parowan High School had the highest percentage of students in the Iron County School District pass the UBSCT assessment.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The most significant and important finding by the school was an ongoing paradigm shift in the way the staff uses data. The school is data-rich in that teachers are mining data to see trends in attendance, achievement levels, and improvement over time. In addition, instead of looking at averages, the school is now looking at who is

learning as well as who is not learning. The analysis indicates that with enrollment dropping, there are more students from poverty, attendance rates are increasing, and student achievement levels (especially in writing) are improving.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The data in the self-study would be more meaningful and useful if it were disaggregated by gender, poverty, ethnicity, ELL status, and special education status so that the school has an accurate picture of who is learning and who is not learning. The school is using COGNOS and SAMS and will be able to easily access this data. It is also suggested that the content departments develop common assessments and consensus scoring so that they may collaborate about data and strategies for improvement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Use senior exit surveys to find out what senior students valued in their learning and student focus groups to determine what would help current students learn more and have a more positive school experience.
- Continue the practice of staff analysis of data to see the trends and learning needs of students.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The school made a concerted effort to include teachers, parents, students, and community members in the self-study process. The school has a strong Community Council, and parents on the council told the Visiting Team that they have been fully involved with the process. Teachers have worked in whole-faculty and departmental meetings to analyze data and complete the self-study process. Students interviewed had a general understanding of the self-study, but many of them said that they were not fully involved in the process.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study is honest and accurate (even though the disaggregated data should have been included). Interestingly enough, the school is doing much, much more with its use of data than the self-study indicates. The members of the Visiting Team

were in agreement that the report was accurate and that the staff, parents, and students were open and honest about the school's strengths and areas for growth.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Parowan High School recognizes the importance of the Life Skills booklet issued by the Utah State Office of Education. They support the need to instill these seven life skills in student learning. The staff has chosen to emphasize four of the seven skills—Responsible Citizenship, Life-Long Learning, Effective Communication and Collaboration—in their desired results for student learning (DRSLs). Effective Communication and Collaboration have been combined into one DRSL.

Parowan High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

Responsible Citizenship

Indicators:

- Students demonstrate understanding of economic, political, social, and environmental systems on a global scale.
- Students understand and promote the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality.
- Through service, students will connect to society.

Effective Communication and Collaboration

Indicators:

- Students assume leadership or participant roles effectively.
- Students integrate the use of a variety of communication forms (i.e., oral, written, artistic, graphic, etc.), and use a variety of communication skills.
- Students communicate with clarity, purpose, and understanding of audience.
- Students work with and recognize diverse populations.
- Students utilize problem-solving skills and strategies.

Preparation for Life-Long Learning

Indicators:

- Students commit to creating quality work.
- Students self-evaluate their learning for the purpose of improvement.
- Students use a variety of learning strategies, personal skills, and time management skills.
- Students acquire proficiency levels in designated content areas.
- The student is able to apply these acquired academic skills to real life situations.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The school's self-study and visits with teachers, students, parents, and community members helped in the process of achieving a shared vision for the school. The Community Council met to discuss the mission statement and what was important to them (such as keeping higher-end classes).

Teachers reported that they also met and discussed and revised the mission statement.

The students did not know about the mission statement, but some did know what the motto was. It is obvious that the students, faculty, and parents need more involvement in defining the mission statement and getting it out to the entire school as something that expresses what the school is all about.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The beliefs appear to be implemented in the school, as shown by the attitude of the teachers. Teachers work hard to make sure every student has the opportunity to succeed. A sense of caring, positive student/teacher relationships, student expectations, and ample opportunities for students to participate in a wide variety of activities is evident in the school.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The Visiting Team recommends that the school ensure that all its stakeholders are aware of the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. This can be accomplished by adding the DRSLs to the student handbook, posting the in classrooms, and spending more time analyzing the DRSLs and making sure they are measurable and attainable.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The staff collaborates often concerning content standards. Since the staff is familiar with the use of data, teachers analyze CRT data to find out whether students are mastering the content standards. In turn, teachers design curricula so that they focus upon State Core standards. In addition, the desired results for student learning are based solely upon the Utah Life Skills.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The school is in an emergent state in relationship to integrating the DRSLs throughout the curriculum. However, there was evidence that the teaching staff is looking for the means to fully integrate the DRSLs in all content areas.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The Visiting Team found ample evidence of student engagement. Students were reading, writing, giving oral presentations, working cooperatively, working on projects, and completing science labs.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team observed teachers utilizing lecture, labs, student presentations, writing activities, think-pair-share, student collaboration, and individual work time. The variety of instructional strategies provides the means for more students to achieve and learn. For example, one student said, "I am a slow learner, but I feel really successful here. The teachers teach so that I can understand it."

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Because the school is so active in collecting data about student learning, it is able to identify students early who are not learning. The students who are struggling are provided with several interventions, including a program called "levels" in which students receive extra help and remediation.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

This is one of the greatest strengths of Parowan High School. The Visiting Team found ample evidence of assessments that are aligned with standards. Teachers collaborate in the design of assessments. This process allows teachers to make sure that the assessments are assessing the standards.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The assessments reflect the intended purpose of performance standards most of the time. Students are assessed in many ways, including writing, multiple-choice questions, performances, oral presentations, and projects.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

There was no evidence of bias or prejudicial placement based on predetermined judgment of students as subgroups.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is an expectation of quality instruction from the leadership, and teachers do indeed utilize effective research-based instructional strategies. Teachers are encouraged and invited to participate in professional development and higher education. The Visiting Team was told several times by several teachers that working at Parowan High School means that you are part of a culture where you are *expected* to continually improve.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

In this case a better question might be, “What decisions *aren’t* based upon data?” There was ample evidence that all major decisions concerning student learning (including the master schedule and instructional design) are based upon data. Teachers in this school continually collect data, analyze data, and use the data for improvement. At the end of each school year, the entire staff meets together and looks at *all* school data and then synthesizes it so that they can make informed decisions about student needs in learning.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school leadership is continually looking at data for trends and for a basis for decision-making. For example, every teacher on the staff keeps a detailed portfolio of assessment data, attendance data, parent contact data, and so forth. This data is reviewed one-on-one with the teacher and Principal Doubek.

As the Visiting Team was told by one focus group chairman, “The self-study process helped us to focus more on what we were doing, but this school has been using data several years before we began this process.” This statement was echoed several times by teachers and parents.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The school is managed in a caring, respectful, and honest manner. Resources are used effectively. There was evidence that resources are aligned with student learning outcomes. The school is clean and safe.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Resources are aligned with student learning needs and school goals.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Parents are involved through the Community Council and PTSO, and have full disclosure of school policies and practices. Parents on the committee told the Visiting Team that they are encouraged by the principal to ask questions and to share ideas on behalf of student learning. The Community Council told the Visiting Team that they are listened to and that they feel like the teachers and administration go out their way to help students succeed.

Teachers feel a responsibility for student learning. They expressed to the Visiting Team that they have autonomy to make decisions that enhance student learning. They know what the expectations are and are very comfortable in collaborating with each other and with the school administration.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Parowan High School is meeting the challenges of being a small rural school in a number of ways. Teachers, parents, and students feel that the teacher/student relationship is one of the school's strongest assets. Parents and students are kept informed of school information (activities, academics, etc.) through a variety of methods, such as the school newspaper, newsletters, SEOP conferences, and school website. Parents were involved in the focus groups and had input regarding things they felt were important.

The school is involved in service learning efforts throughout the community, such as providing food, materials, furniture for Dixie Care and Share, making humanitarian projects, building sheds, making projects for the elementary school, and helping clean out the spillways for flood prevention from spring runoff. These activities help students develop a community spirit and individual self-worth.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The faculty members share most of the students and have the opportunity to communicate regularly. There is a strong collegiality among the staff and administration. Because of the small school environment, struggling students are identified earlier and interventions are in place to ensure student success. The school has implemented an after-school tutoring program where students can go to receive extra help.

There is effective support for student learning in the team approach that is made possible by the A/B block scheduling. Many of the faculty members share common prep periods. Thematic units are used interdepartmentally, and many teachers team-teach across various areas such as social studies and language arts.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Parowan High School has been involved in focused professional development in the form of "Six Traits of Writing" and "Writing Across the Curriculum." Teachers had 100 percent attendance at the workshops. The administration gives each department chair a monthly copy of the *Educational Journal*. The magazine articles are to be used as part of their regularly scheduled departmental meetings as in-services. The faculty also regularly receives the "Master Teacher" pamphlet. The district offers monthly technology classes.

Next year's professional development topic will cover Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock's book, *Classroom Instruction that Works*.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

A large percentage of teachers have completed their master's degree, and more are in progress. There is a culture prevalent in the school of the desire to improve and implement change when needed. Next year they will have weekly professional development meetings.

The principal has organized a document called "Teacher Profile Data," of which each teacher and the principal keeps a copy. This profile is used to help make progressive strides in teacher instruction. Every quarter teachers fill out data regarding grading distributions to be returned to the principal. The teachers also fill out a Personal Improvement Plan.

At the end of each year each teacher has an interview with the principal and is required to present data on student enrollment, attendance percentage, parent contacts, and percentage of assignments completed; teachers then work together to find a pattern and identify areas for improvement. The principal also has interviews (performance reviews) with the classified personnel.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Parowan High's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is **not** met. Although the school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support, the library media coordinator does not have a library/media license.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed, or are in state-approved programs to be endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Parowan High provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Parowan High supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan is adequate, but there is a need for more detail in area of follow-up. An effective action plan requires information on specific people responsible for follow-up, with a specific timeline and list of needed resources.

There was no indication of the time frame for the action plan. The Visiting Team reminds the school that the action plan should be a five-year plan for improvement.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

There is commitment from the major stakeholders (teachers, parents, and administration) to the action plan. There is sustainability on this staff, meaning that there are enough teacher leaders in the school who are committed to the action plan that it is embedded in the school culture.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

There is a need to make the follow-up process more specific (please see major recommendations of the Visiting Team).

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the teachers for being student-focused and for developing and maintaining positive relationships between students and staff. The

Visiting Team was told over and over by students and parents that the teachers in this school would do what it takes to help students succeed.

- The Visiting Team commends Parowan High for its use of and understanding of data. Data is used appropriately in that it is used to answer three essential questions: (1) Who is not learning? (2) What is it that students are not learning? (3) What will we do if the students are not learning?
- The Visiting Team commends Parowan High for developing a caring and inviting climate and culture for students, parents, and community members. The Visiting Team further commends the secretarial staff for maintaining an inviting environment for students and parents, and the custodial staff for maintaining a clean and safe building.
- The Visiting Team commends Parowan High for the large number of students who participate in significant service learning opportunities. Students told the Visiting Team that these opportunities connect them to the community and the world beyond, and that they enjoy serving others.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty members for collaborating with each other on behalf of student success. The Visiting Team acknowledges that, despite time and scheduling restraints, the teaching staff makes time to collaborate on content, instructional design, and assessments.
- The Visiting Team commends Principal Doubek for having high expectations and a vision for student learning, and for facilitating a school culture of high expectations.

Recommendations:

- The mission statement is too long and cumbersome. The Visiting Team recommends that the mission be re-written so that it is short, succinct, to the point, and truly reflective of what drives the school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff analyze the indicators for the desired results for student learning (DRSLs) and design measurable indicators and the means to integrate the DRSLs in all contents. The Visiting Team further recommends that the school consider including holistic data in this process.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan be revised so that it reflects a five-year time frame, and that it include specific timeframes, specific people responsible, and specific ways to evaluate implementation.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff design a five-year professional development plan that is aligned with the school improvement plan and school data. The Visiting Team further recommends that the school pursue the means for more

teacher collaboration time that is focused on analyzing data, student work, and instructional strategies.